

A voice for Rhode Island's rivers and the people who love them

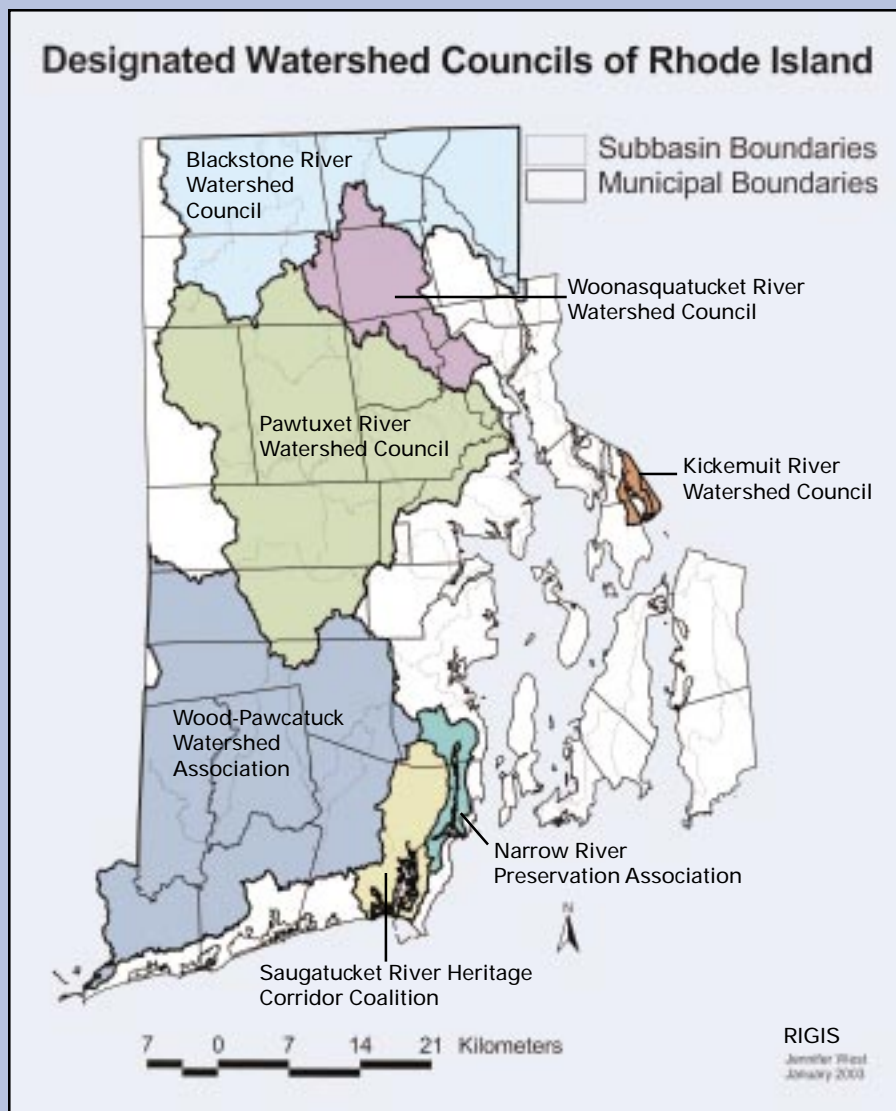


2002

Rhode Island  
Rivers Council  
Annual Report







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Rhode Island  
Rivers Council



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*University of Rhode Island*

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Inside back cover: Kickemuit River Watershed Council  
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Page 2: *Top* Narrow River Preservation Association  
*Middle* Pawtuxet River Watershed Council  
*Bottom* Narrow River Preservation Association  
Page 3: *Top* Narrow River Preservation Association  
*Bottom* Photo by Al Riccio of Al Riccio Photography  
Pages 5 & 6: Saugatucket River Heritage Corridor Coalition  
Page 7: Kickemuit River Watershed Council  
Pages 8 & 9: Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council  
Page 10: Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association  
Page 11: URI Coastal Resources Center  
Page 12: Bill Krul  
Page 13: Narrow River Preservation Association  
Page 14: Blackstone River Watershed Council



Linda Green, URI Watershed Watch program director, demonstrates water quality testing techniques on the Wood River.

# 2002 Rhode Island Rivers Council

Annual Report as required by Chapter 46-28-10 of the General Laws

Rhode Island is rediscovering the power of its rivers. The amazing Providence Renaissance, which began when the city's rivers were uncovered and beautified, demonstrates how rivers can be used to drive economic revitalization. Throughout the state, from the Blackstone River to the Saugatucket River, watershed communities are replicating Providence's success by restoring rivers to enhance neighborhoods. With the support of local watershed organizations, people are using the rivers that once powered Rhode Island's industrial past to enhance local economies through community development, recreation, and tourism. The Rhode Island Rivers Council works to support these local river organizations and advocate for watershed issues within the state by coordinating with state agencies and developing river policy.

## Recognize and Strengthen Watershed Councils

This has been an exciting year for the Rivers Council. The council recognized the Blackstone River Watershed Council and the Narrow River Preservation Association, expanding a membership that includes the Pawcatuck, Pawtuxet, Woonasquatucket, Kickemuit, and Saugatucket watershed councils. The seven watershed councils now recognized by the Rivers Council care for 66 percent of the state's total area.

## Fundraising

The Rhode Island Legislature continued its support for the Rivers Council and watershed councils by providing funds to support watershed activities. The resulting grants to the seven watershed councils leveraged thousands of dollars in outside investment and volunteer time and created a legacy of watershed improvement.

Al Jaffa, Trout Unlimited volunteer, conducts a fish survey of the Wood River.







Then-governor Lincoln Almond, third from right, leads a ground-breaking ceremony for a storm water remediation project on the Narrow River.



Construction on the Narrow River project begins.



The Pawtuxet River Watershed Council recognizes student writers.

## Research

Brown University environmental science students worked with watershed councils on technical projects to strengthen the statewide watershed initiative. Student projects helped the councils with priority river enhancement initiatives:

- ◆ A build-out analysis in Coventry, R.I. (for the Pawtuxet River Watershed Council)
- ◆ Research on septic systems in the Smokerise Development, Swansea, Mass. (for the Kickemuit River Watershed Council)
- ◆ Access Points to the Woonasquatucket River: Problem Areas and Potential Development in the Woonasquatucket River Watershed
- ◆ Aquatic Herbicides in the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed

## Workshops

A Rivers Council workshop held in March for watershed councils featured presentations on watershed monitoring. Monitoring water quality is an important step in a full watershed assessment, and many watershed councils had not been aware of the breadth of monitoring occurring in Rhode Island. Presentations by the R.I. Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), by the University of Rhode Island's (URI) Watershed Watch program, and by the editor of the national *Volunteer Monitor* newsletter provided 60 attendees an overview of existing and potential monitoring in their watersheds.

With support from the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, Rhode Island Sea Grant, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Rivers Council hosted skill-building workshops designed especially for watershed organizations during October, November, and December. Rhode Island's watershed councils joined councils from Massachusetts in four workshops taught by the Institute for Conservation Leadership, a nationally renowned organization specializing in building strong conserva-

tion organizations. The councils learned how to build strong boards, how to maximize the use of volunteers, and how to develop a funding strategy. The workshops also helped build a learning network among the participants to encourage collaborative initiatives.

## Rivers Day

The energy and excitement surrounding rivers surged on R.I. Rivers Day, June 15, 2002. Rain didn't dampen the spirits of people statewide cleaning up rivers, working on educational programs, canoeing, and kayaking.



Runners participate in the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Narrow River Road Race.

## Developing Rivers Policies

Work on revisions to the *Rivers Policy and Classification Plan* continued with the council planning future efforts to revise the classifications portion of the plan to reflect:

- ◆ Amended watershed delineations. Consistent definitions of the state's watersheds using the Hydrologic Unit Codes were developed in conjunction with RIDEM, the Water Resources Board, the U.S. Geological Survey, and others. These definitions will be incorporated into the new plan.
- ◆ Added tidal rivers segments. The Rivers Council will adopt R.I. Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) classifications for the tidal portions of the rivers.

## Rivers Council Priorities for 2003

- ◆ Continue to work with the Rhode Island Legislature to fund watershed councils and their activities.
- ◆ Continue to host workshops to build the skills of watershed councils and to support the learning network that formed during the 2002 workshops among Rhode Island and Massachusetts organizations.
- ◆ Recognize new watershed councils.
- ◆ Finalize revisions to the watershed delineation and classification portions of the *Rivers Policy and Classification Plan*.
- ◆ Organize committees to review and recommend changes to the policies in the *Rivers Policy and Classification Plan*.



The Pawtuxet River Watershed Council recognizes Governor Don Carcieri, third from right.



## List of Rivers Council Members, December 2002

According to RIGL 46-28-5, the Rivers Council shall consist of 15 members.

Member	Appointed by	Term Expires
Elizabeth Gowell	Governor	July 1, 2005
Stephen Kearns	Governor	July 1, 2003
Jane Sherman	Governor	July 1, 2004
Tricia Jedele	Lieutenant Governor	July 1, 2002
Dale Grogan	Lieutenant Governor	July 1, 2003
Meg Kerr	Lieutenant Governor	July 1, 2004
Rep. Eileen Naughton	Speaker of the House	July 1, 2003
Rep. Scott Rabideau	Speaker of the House	July 1, 2003
vacant	Speaker of the House	July 1, 2003
Sen. Elizabeth Roberts	Majority Leader of the Senate	July 1, 2003
Daniel Varin	Majority Leader of the Senate	July 1, 2003
Scott Millar	Department of Environmental Management	no term
Kevin Cute	Coastal Resources Management Council	no term
Kevin Nelson	Department of Administration	no term
Diane Feather	League of Cities and Towns	no term

## What is the Rhode Island Rivers Council?

The Rhode Island Rivers Council was established by the Rhode Island Legislature in 1991. It is part of the R.I. Statewide Planning Program within the state Department of Administration. The council consists of 15 members who serve three-year terms and are appointed by the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Senate majority leader. Members represent such state agencies as RIDEM and CRMC, as well as the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns.

## Purpose

The Rivers Council is charged with coordinating, overseeing, and reviewing efforts to improve and preserve the quality of rivers and to develop plans to increase the use of river areas throughout the state. The work of the Rivers Council supports state goals of preserving Rhode Island's natural, cultural, and historic resources and features; protecting opportunities for the recreational use of rivers; encouraging the creation of greenways; and strengthening comprehensive and regional planning for rivers, water quality, and land use.

The Legislature created the Rivers Council to consolidate the state's approach to implementing river policies and plans that impact the environmental, cultural, and economic qualities of river areas; to recognize and empower local watershed councils; and to foster public involvement in river planning and decision-making.

The Legislature also declared that many of Rhode Island's rivers "possess outstanding aesthetic and recreational value" and that "the preservation of these rivers and their immediate environment together with their significant recreational, natural and cultural value is hereby declared to be a public policy. It shall be the policy of the State of Rhode Island to protect these values and to practice sound conservation policies and practices relative thereto."

## What are the Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities of the Rivers Council?

The Rivers Council is not a regulatory body, but a planning and coordination board charged with developing a Rhode Island State Rivers Policy and Classification Plan, and advising decision-makers on river improvement and protection measures. The Rivers Council promotes appropriate river use, fosters public involvement in river planning and decision-making, and designates watershed councils as local stewards of the state's rivers and advocates of the Rhode Island Rivers Policy and Classification Plan.

# 2002 Watershed Council Highlights

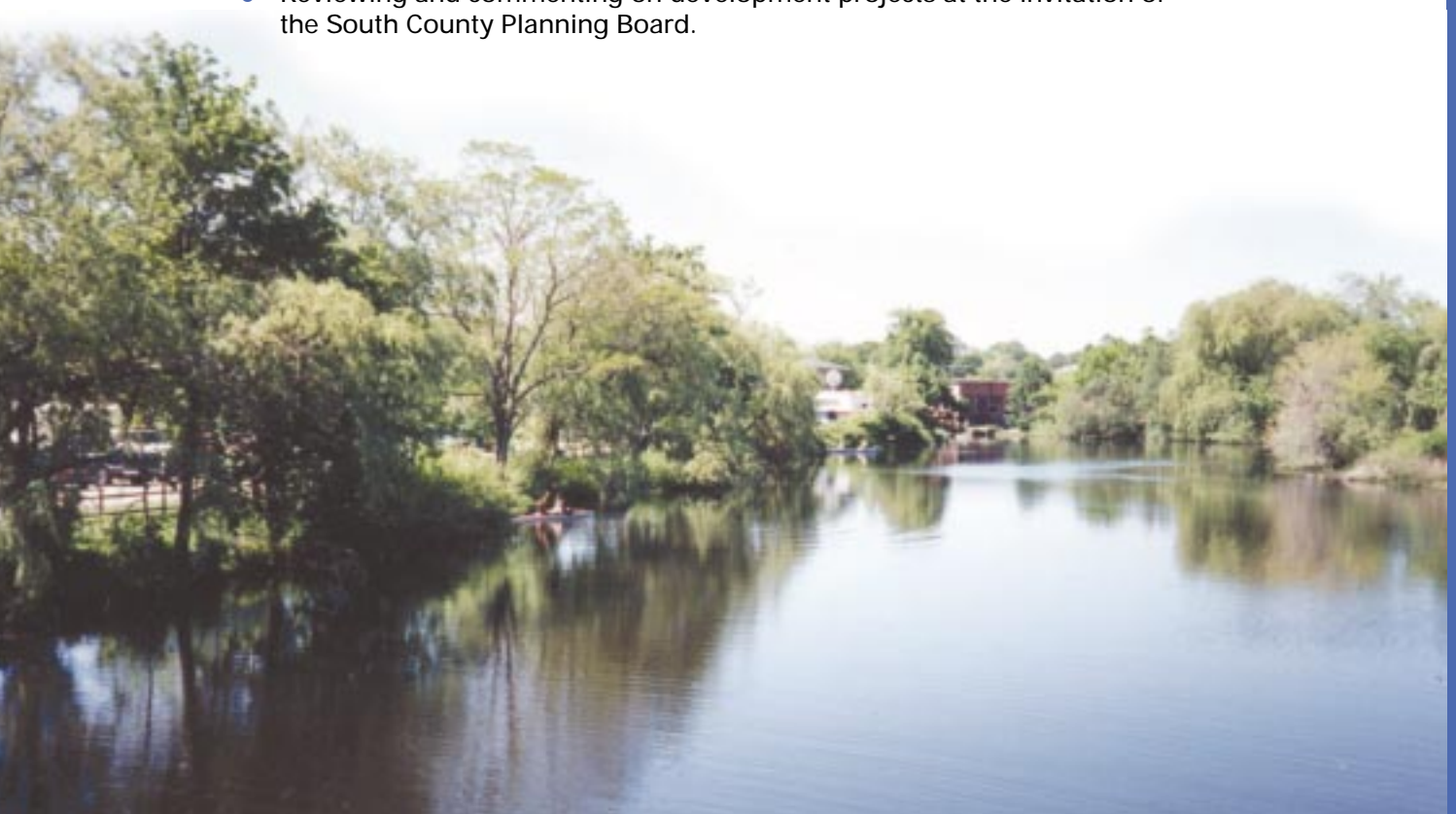
Complete reports from the councils are available at the Rivers Council Web site:  
[www.planning.state.ri.us/rivers/default.htm](http://www.planning.state.ri.us/rivers/default.htm)

## Saugatucket River Heritage Corridor Coalition

[www.saugatucket.org](http://www.saugatucket.org)

The Saugatucket River Heritage Corridor Coalition (SRHCC) is a volunteer organization established in 1994 to protect and promote the Saugatucket River and its watershed. The coalition consists of community, civic, and neighborhood organizations. In the mid-1990s, the SRHCC completed and adopted a vision plan that delineates a long-term work plan. Activities in 2002 included:

- ◆ Celebrating Rivers Day 2002 with a morning river cleanup and an evening Historic Downtown Merchants Association block party including fires in the river.
- ◆ Launching a research program on the efficacy of the "Grate Mates" stormwater filtering program (created by the nonprofit organization PlanetCPR) with the installation of a sample filter with the South Kingstown High School science department.
- ◆ Reviewing and commenting on development projects at the invitation of the South County Planning Board.





- ◆ Completing a design enhancement project—Main Street East—that demonstrates how Tower Hill Road in Wakefield could be made more pedestrian-friendly. The project, partially funded by the R.I. Foundation, promotes reconfiguring landscaping and resurfacing parking lots and impervious surfaces to enhance treatment of storm water runoff.
- ◆ Monitoring the cleanup of the Rose Hill Landfill, a Superfund toxic waste site. The SRHCC is seeking independent funding for sludge cleanup not included in the Superfund remediation plan undertaken by EPA, RIDEM, and the towns of South Kingstown and Narragansett.
- ◆ Conducting four river and greenway cleanups, as well as tree plantings and trail maintenance and expansion.
- ◆ Sponsoring Saugatucket Park, adjacent to the river, under South Kingstown's Adopt-a-Park program, and providing funding for maintenance of the park's garden.
- ◆ Making suggestions to the South Kingstown Land Trust on desirable land acquisitions to protect the watershed and expand the Saugatucket River Green Corridor, and pursuing land gifts in the river corridor.
- ◆ Developing a map of hiking trails for the future Saugatucket River Pedestrian Walkway.
- ◆ Securing trail markers from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program for developing a self-guided walking tour of historic sites.
- ◆ Working with the Friends of Peace Dale and the Historic Downtown Merchants Association to promote the Saugatucket River as an amenity and a destination.



# Kickemuit River Watershed Council

The Kickemuit River Watershed Council was incorporated in 1973 to clean up the Kickemuit River and was designated by the Rivers Council in 2001. The council is composed of voting members from the organizations around the saltwater portion of the Kickemuit River in Warren and Bristol. Activities in 2002 included:

- ◆ Promoting the use of the pumpout boat by publicizing pumpout schedules.
- ◆ Informing town officials about environmental issues facing the Kickemuit and advocating for the EPA Brayton Point Power Station Permit by writing letters, coordinating a petition drive, and speaking to municipal councils.
- ◆ Conducting water quality investigations targeting sources of fecal contamination and hiring consultants to investigate whether individual homes are tied in to the sewers.
- ◆ Conducting river cleanups in Bristol and Warren during R.I. Rivers Month (June).
- ◆ Teaching lessons on the value of Rhode Island's waters to first and second grade classes at Reynolds School in Bristol.
- ◆ Advocating to CRMC for continued shoreline access as docks proliferate along the river.

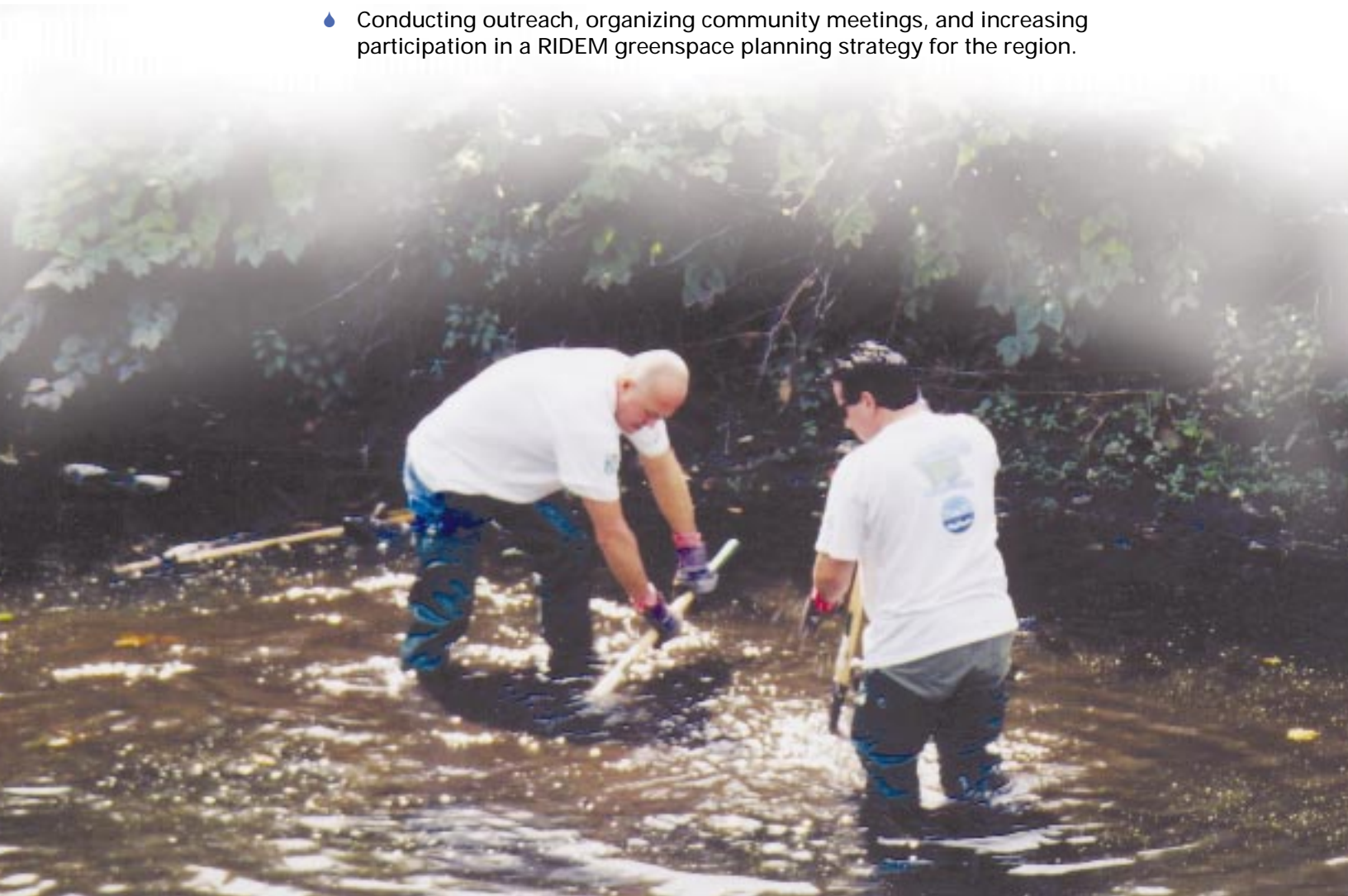


# Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

[www.woonasquatucket.org](http://www.woonasquatucket.org)

The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC) is a nonprofit organization working to restore the Woonasquatucket River and the communities that make up its watershed. The WRWC is made up of representatives from the six watershed communities—North Smithfield, Smithfield, Glocester, Johnston, North Providence, and Providence. Its mission is to encourage, support, and promote the restoration and preservation of the Woonasquatucket River watershed as an environmental, recreational, cultural, and economic asset of the state of Rhode Island. Activities in 2002 included:

- ◆ Securing \$20,000 in funding from the Partnership for Narragansett Bay (PNB) for a wetland restoration project at Deerfield Park in Smithfield; conducting river cleanups with the Narragansett Bay Commission, community organizations, and residents; and promoting land acquisition efforts by partnering with local landowners, local government, and nonprofit organizations.
- ◆ Holding a forum for the land trusts in the watershed to introduce the council and to talk about the upcoming greenspace planning project.
- ◆ Conducting outreach, organizing community meetings, and increasing participation in a RIDEM greenspace planning strategy for the region.







- ◆ Working with RIDEM on a successful application to EPA for a Smart Growth grant—one of only nine awarded in the country—to hire a consultant to review current zoning and land use ordinances for the river corridor in Providence and to recommend changes that will promote land use more compatible with neighborhood plans and river protections.
- ◆ Meeting with planners from northern Rhode Island communities to encourage and to help coordinate their submission of a joint proposal to the Transportation Improvement Program for bike path planning. The WRWC helped facilitate discussions regarding funding for heritage markers along the Woonasquatucket River.
- ◆ Reinforcing health and environmental messages taught to students in an EPA-sponsored education program by partnering with the Northern R.I. Conservation District to conduct a watershed-wide poster contest in third and fourth grade classrooms. The winning classrooms earned a “Rooting for Revitalization” field day in Merino Park that featured tree planting and education sessions.
- ◆ Continuing work with the Narragansett Bay Commission on its water quality monitoring project with six elementary school classrooms from watershed communities.



# Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

[www.wpwa.org](http://www.wpwa.org)

The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA), a conservation organization formed in 1983, was designated the watershed council for the Pawcatuck in 1999. Accomplishments for 2002 include:

- ◆ Conducting studies of water quality and quantity and assessing biological aspects of river ecosystems. WPWA interns also explored aquatic herbicide use in the watershed.
- ◆ Providing a variety of educational programs for students, teachers, property owners, and municipal officials.
- ◆ Making recommendations to local zoning boards and participating in state and regional discussions about water supply allocation, anadromous fish passage, greenspace protection, and surface and groundwater quality.
- ◆ Providing outdoor programs to encourage use of river trails and hiking trails. Activities annually include a "Source to Sea" paddle in June, learn-to-fish programs in July, weekly summer river exploration programs for camp groups from around the state, canoe trips, and hikes.
- ◆ Receiving state enhancement funds to improve an established Wood River access way as well as a private donation of land to establish a new access way to the Ashaway River.
- ◆ Improving two additional access areas and clearing river trail obstructions with the help of local scout troops and R.I. Trails Advisory Committee funds.

Volunteer Bruce Clark conducts a fish survey of the Wood River.





# Pawtuxet River Watershed Council

[www.pawtuxet.org](http://www.pawtuxet.org)

The Pawtuxet River Watershed Council (PRWC) is a nonprofit corporation created in 1972. Activities in 2002 included:

- ◆ Sponsoring a writing project for 50 fourth grade students in two Cranston public elementary schools. The project culminated with the publication of *A River Flows By—Our Reflections*, a booklet of student writing.
- ◆ Working through the Rhode Island Rivers Council and the Brown University Center for Environmental Studies to engage students in a residentially zoned land build-out analysis for Coventry.
- ◆ Collaborating with the R.I. Department of Transportation to have “Pawtuxet River” signs erected on main routes along the river and “Entering Pawtuxet River Watershed” signs erected on main routes throughout the watershed.
- ◆ Forming the West Warwick Riverwalk Committee, which created a conceptual plan for a river walkway. In June, the General Assembly included the project as a \$3 million component of a \$14 million heritage bond, which Rhode Island voters approved in November.
- ◆ Working on the Veterans Square River Access Project, which opens the viewshed and improves access to the river.
- ◆ Obtaining \$140,000 in grants to design and build a fish passage at Pawtuxet Falls where the Pawtuxet River and its watershed enter Narragansett Bay. In June, the PRWC took tax title to the Natick Dam. The dam forms the Natick Pond section of the Pawtuxet River where the confluence of the river’s north and south branches is located.
- ◆ Raising money and conducting festivities for the Pawtuxet River Watershed on Rivers Day.
- ◆ Holding its third annual River Heritage Celebration at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet.
- ◆ Using Web-based technology to identify and solicit grants and sponsorships to fund and manage projects and to communicate with government agencies, private sector companies, and nonprofit organizations.
- ◆ Developing the PRWC Web site to include more than 100 separate pages.



# Narrow River Preservation Association

[www.narrowriver.org](http://www.narrowriver.org)

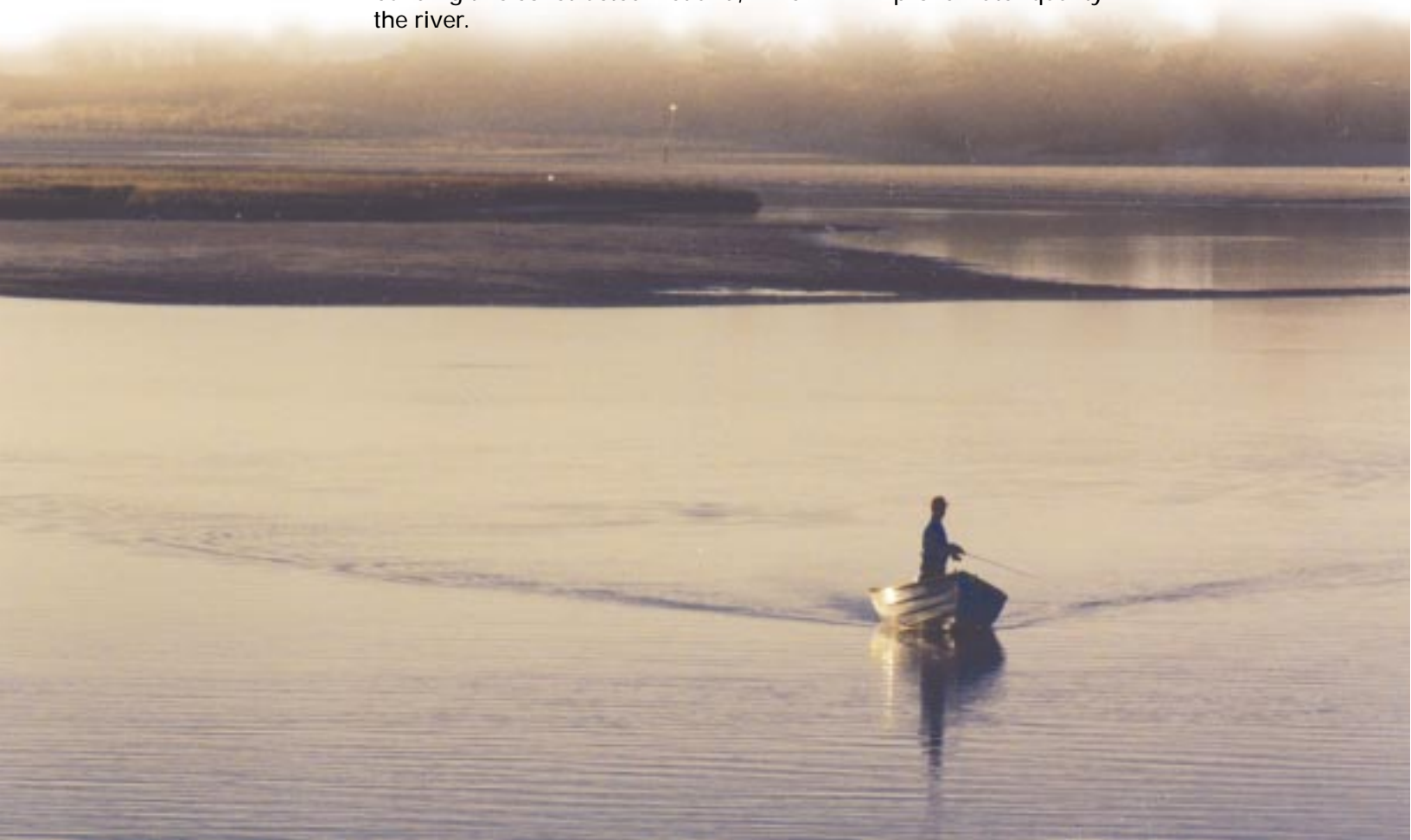
The mission of the Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) is to preserve the quality of the communities and natural environment within the Pettaquamscutt (Narrow River) Watershed. The NRPA:

- ◆ Cooperates with environmental groups and local, state, and federal agencies in planning and monitoring development within the watershed.
- ◆ Works to make the community aware of the history, problems, and potential of the watershed.
- ◆ Maintains awareness of changes proposed in the watershed and insures that they are of benefit to all communities in the watershed.

NRPA was designated an official watershed council in June.

## **Activities in 2002 included:**

- ◆ Initiating citizen volunteer Watershed Action Teams, in conjunction with RIDEM and the Southern R.I. Conservation District, to address a variety of nonpoint source pollution issues.
- ◆ Partnering on development of a storm water BMP (best management practice). Work was started on a pair of water quality basins at one of the river's worst storm drains. The town of Narragansett is responsible for building this constructed wetland, which will improve water quality in the river.





- ◆ Funding the Active Watershed Education (AWEsome) program at 11 local schools. The program has involved 26 teachers and educated 2,700 students.
- ◆ Revising *The Narrow River Handbook*, a citizen's guide to environmentally responsible living in the watershed.
- ◆ Continuing the Narrow River water quality monitoring program, River Watch, in conjunction with URI's Watershed Watch.
- ◆ Holding the 15th Annual Road Race, a NRPA fundraiser, which attracted more than 400 participants and highlighted the river's scenic value.
- ◆ Cosponsoring activities for Rivers Day in collaboration with two other watershed groups in South County.
- ◆ Working with the Narrow River Land Trust to facilitate the preservation of remaining undeveloped land in the watershed. During 2002, 68 acres were added to the inventory of protected open space.
- ◆ Lobbying for a safer bridge on Narrow River, which culminated in a groundbreaking for the new Middle Bridge in October.
- ◆ Working with the three watershed communities and obtaining rights from the General Assembly to control personal watercraft ("Jet Skis") on the river.

*To preserve the quality of  
the communities and  
the natural  
environment*

Tony Lachowicz (center), executive director of the Narrow River Preservation Association, shown with Jan Rietsma (left), director of RIDEM, and Meg Kerr (right), chair of the Rhode Island Rivers Council, receives Rivers Council recognition.



# Blackstone River Watershed Council

The Blackstone River Watershed Council (BRWC) is a volunteer organization advocating the protection and preservation of the Blackstone River Watershed and its tributaries. The BRWC was established by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council in 1997 and designated a watershed council in 2002. The BRWC's board is made up of appointed representatives from each of the nine communities and from local, state, and federal agencies. Activities in 2002 included:

- ◆ Receiving a \$300,000 open space grant from RIDEM to protect a portion of the Long Brook property located in Cumberland. In addition to its importance as a high quality aquatic system, it is the only system in Rhode Island that supports a population of the state-threatened American brook lamprey. The small tributaries that feed Long Brook support a rich natural community that includes several state-listed plants.
- ◆ Awarding 10 scholarships to graduating seniors who displayed commitment to the watershed.
- ◆ Organizing a program celebrating the river and honoring Blackstone River Watershed volunteers. The BRWC presented the John H. Chafee R.I. Rivers Day Award to Keith Hainley for his work on the river.
- ◆ Coordinating volunteer Earth Day cleanups throughout the watershed.
- ◆ Securing "Don't Dump—Drains to River" decals on more than 300 storm drains throughout the nine watershed communities.
- ◆ Developing a Blackstone Watershed Action Plan in conjunction with RIDEM.
- ◆ Conducting stewardship efforts to remove debris from the river and its banks.



Senators Lincoln Chafee and Jack Reed and Central Falls Mayor Lee Matthews recognize student scholarship recipients.

A John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor ranger describes the Blackstone River during a Rivers Day boat tour.





## Rhode Island Rivers Council Budget 2002

	Funds Received	Expenditures	Leveraged Resources	Total Leverage
<b>2001 Legislative Grant</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$52,089</b>		<b>\$474,459</b>
<b>Blackstone</b>			\$300,000*	\$300,000
<b>Wood-Pawcatuck</b>	\$10,000			
Salary		\$6,500		
Payroll taxes		\$325		
Travel		\$50		
Supplies		\$250		
Printing and copying		\$500		
Utilities		\$650		
Postage		\$225		
Equipment		\$1,500		
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$10,000</b>		
RI Foundation Grant			\$20,000	\$20,000
<b>Pawtuxet</b>	\$10,000			
Hardware and equipment		\$1,317		
Software project		\$656		
Web connection/hosting		\$1,650		
Web design		\$1,800		
Supplies		\$540		
Signage		\$410		
Grant writing		\$2,700		
Graphic design		\$675		
Information		\$252		
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$10,000</b>		
Grants			\$51,000	
Volunteer Time			\$10,505	\$61,505
<b>Woonasquatucket</b>	\$10,000			
Rent/Utilities		\$4,350		
Phone/Fax		\$922		
Office supplies		\$1432		
Insurance		\$1148		
Postage/Mailing		\$654		
Printing		\$552		
Equipment		\$169		
Signage		\$773		
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$10,000</b>		
PNB grant			\$20,000	
RI Foundation grant			\$25,000	
Legislative grants			\$1,500	
RIDEM Earth Day grant			\$400	
Donations			\$800	\$47,700
<b>Kickemuit</b>	\$10,000			
Environmental consultants		\$9,000		
Sediment testing		\$1,000	\$572	
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$10,000</b>		
Volunteer time			\$1,798	
Water testing			\$1,500	\$3,870
<b>Saugatucket</b>	\$10,000			
Rent		\$8,400		
Newsletter		\$1,100		
Phone		\$203		
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$9,703</b>		
Volunteer time (300 hours)			\$10,500	\$10,500

## Rivers Council expenditures and leveraged effort

	Funds Received	Expenditures	Leveraged Resources	Total Leverage	
<b>2001 Legislative Grant</b>	<b>\$2,386</b>			<b>\$31,456</b>	
<b>3-6-02 workshop for watershed councils</b>					
Presenters' time/effort (5 x 10 hours x \$20/hr)			\$1,000		
Attendees' time (55 attendees x 3 hours x \$20/hr)			\$3,300		
Workshop materials (contributed by Rhode Island Sea Grant)			\$200		
Food		\$161	\$180	\$4,680	
<b>Rivers Council 2001 Annual Report</b>					
Layout (contributed by Environmental Science Services, Inc.)			\$1,000		
Printing		\$1,600			
Mailing (contributed by Rhode Island Sea Grant)			\$185	\$1,185	
<b>Watershed Council Designation</b>					
Legal Ad - soliciting applications		\$264			
Legal Ad - announcing councils		\$194			
Food for public hearing (6-11-02)		\$47			
<b>Other Expenses</b>					
Plaques for Rep. Naughton and M. Cassidy		\$120			
<b>General Administrative Expenses</b>					
DEM staff time (Scott Millar, administrator, clerical)			\$2,000		
RISG/CRC staff expenses			\$17,856		
Meg Kerr (10 hours/week for 45 weeks)					
Clerical support (40 hours)			\$1,035		
Public Relations support (40 hours)			\$1,400		
RI DOA support (Kevin Nelson)			\$3,300	\$25,591	

\* The Blackstone Watershed Council was awarded a \$300,000 open space grant from RIDEM in November 2002. The council was the first watershed council to receive an open space grant, and was eligible for the grant because of its official recognition by the Rivers Council.